9TH EDITION

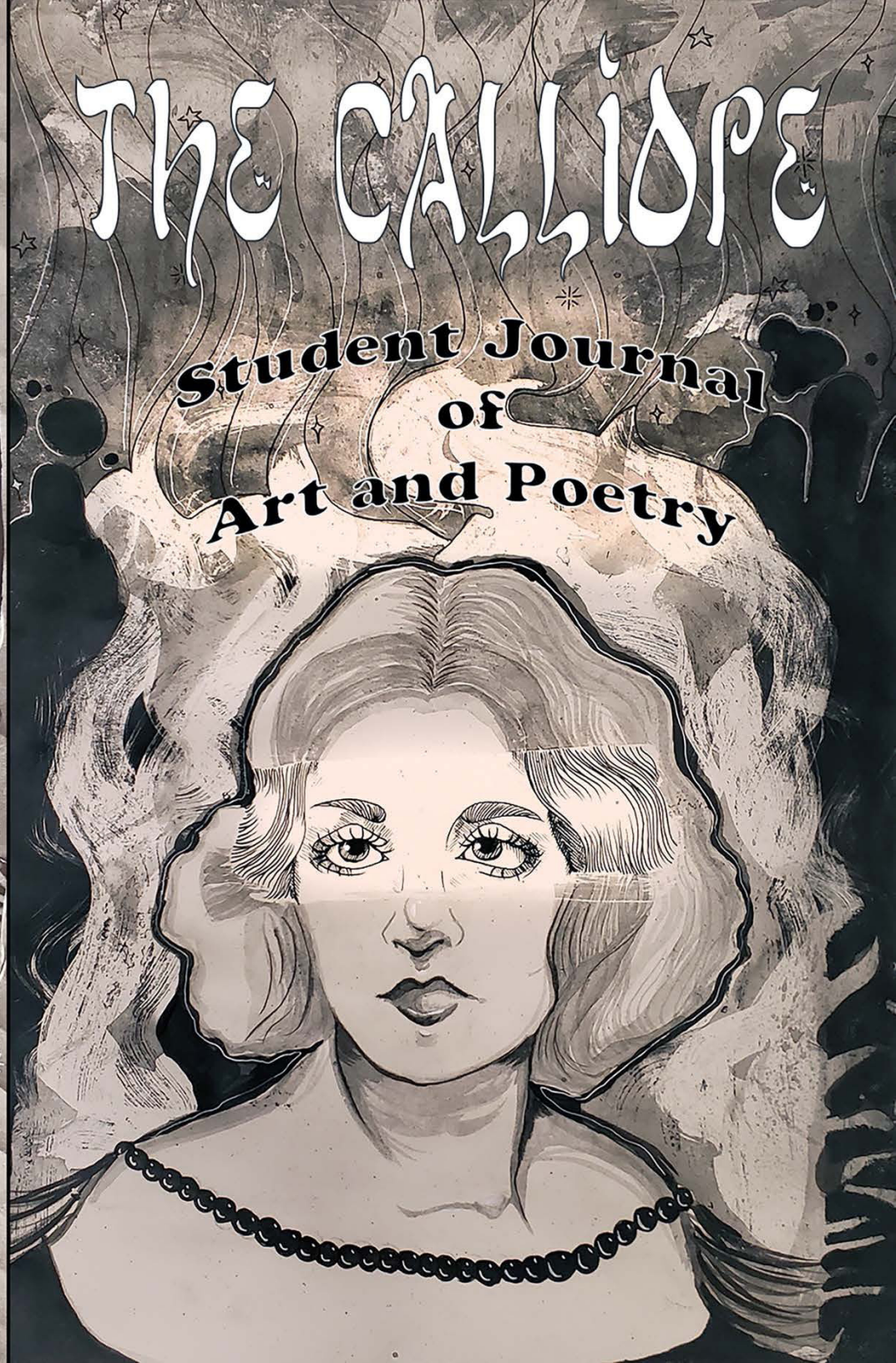
ITAWAMBA

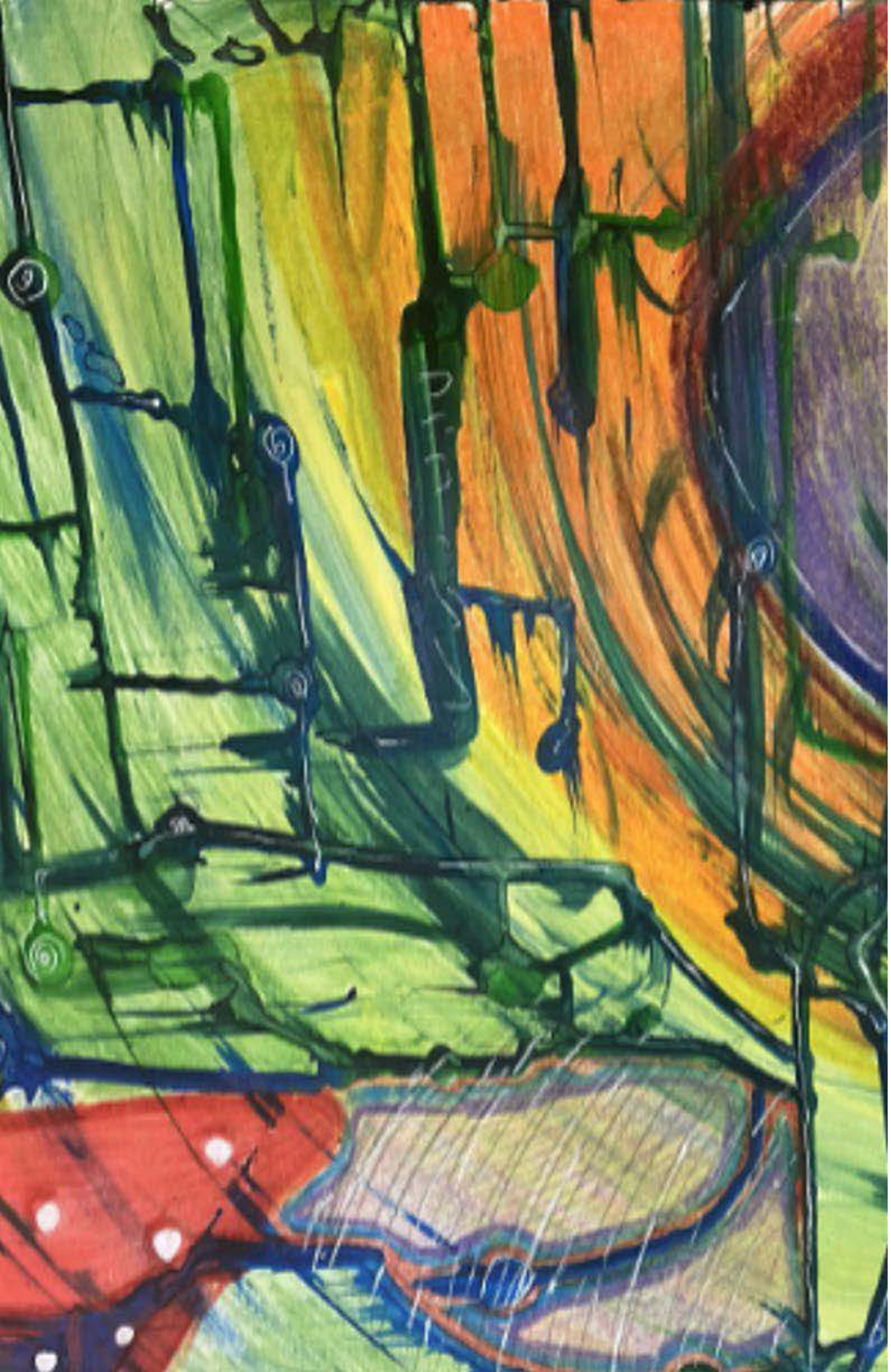
community college

2023

The Calliope

Student Journal of Art and Poetry





FOREWORD

The first edition of The Calliope was published over a decade ago. When the idea was first conceived, I had no idea how to edit a journal and I still do not claim to know. But I had the vaguest notion that students at ICC could provide the talent to make up for my lack of editing skills. My modest expectations were met with an overwhelming display of virtuosity by our student artists and poets more than I could hardly have imagined. As I read these poems and view these images, I am yet again deeply moved by their deep and profound insights. The time-honored fusion of art and poetry once again works its alchemical magic.

Shawn Whittington – Art Editor

Keith Morris – Poetry Editor

Anna Gregory – Student Poetry Editor

Carley White – Student Poetry Editor

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Birth

by Jordan Allen

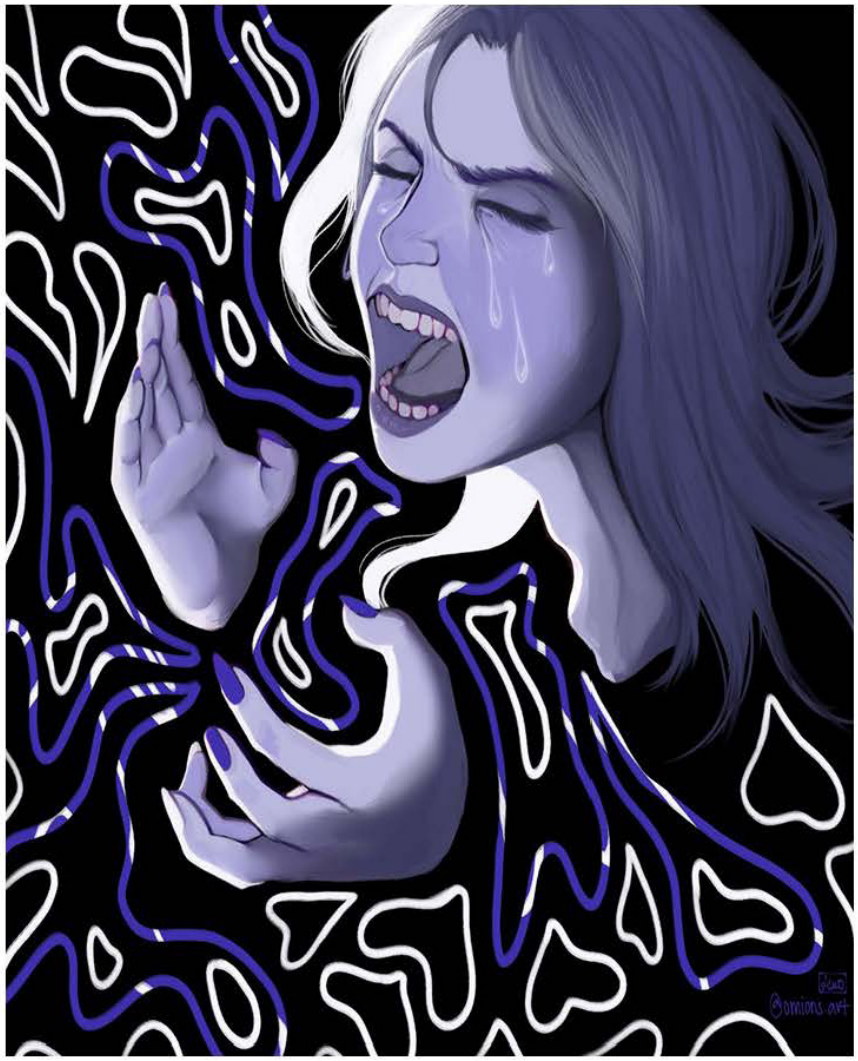
Biology of life

Introduction to culture

Readiness of learning

The truth that

Hurts



Untitled

by Taniya Patterson

Leaves are so free
They have no specific place they are supposed to be
They can just go without anything holding them back
Then, they get to see the seasons change
While also changing themselves

That is what we are trying to achieve
The life of no restrictions
The life with no worries
No critics, no negativity
Just free living

Life is so short,
And you cannot revise time,
So try not to worry
Because like leaves, we have the ability to be free

Chase the dreams you wish to achieve
Try to be optimistic and encouraged
Instead of being afraid or pessimistic
Every day is a new adventure
And you are blessed if you get to see the next one

Hiraeth

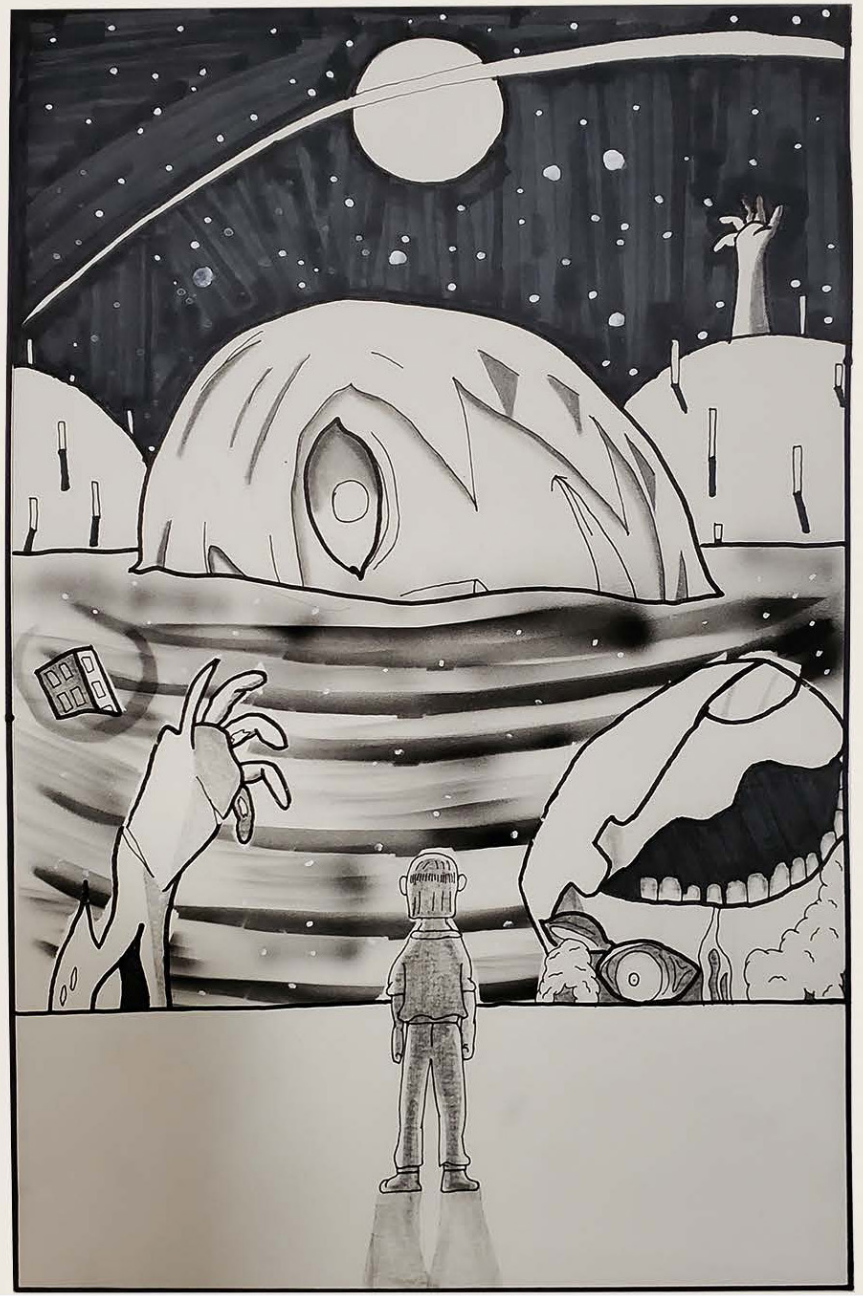
by Sophia Martin

As the rope tugs, I follow searching,
Wandering the open fields of my mind.
Like the hare scouts the meadow for nourishment,
I too desire nourishment,
Not to satisfy the stomach, but to satisfy my soul.

The willow tree blows to and fro
In the wind. I too am like the willow tree,
Swaying in my thoughts,
If there is a beginning to a rope, where is its end?

As the lone wolf wanders, I too am a lone wolf,
Wandering for somewhere...
A book has many chapters, but where is my ending?
My heart yearns as a cub yearns for its mother's warmth,
Not the warmth of body, but for the warmth of a place.

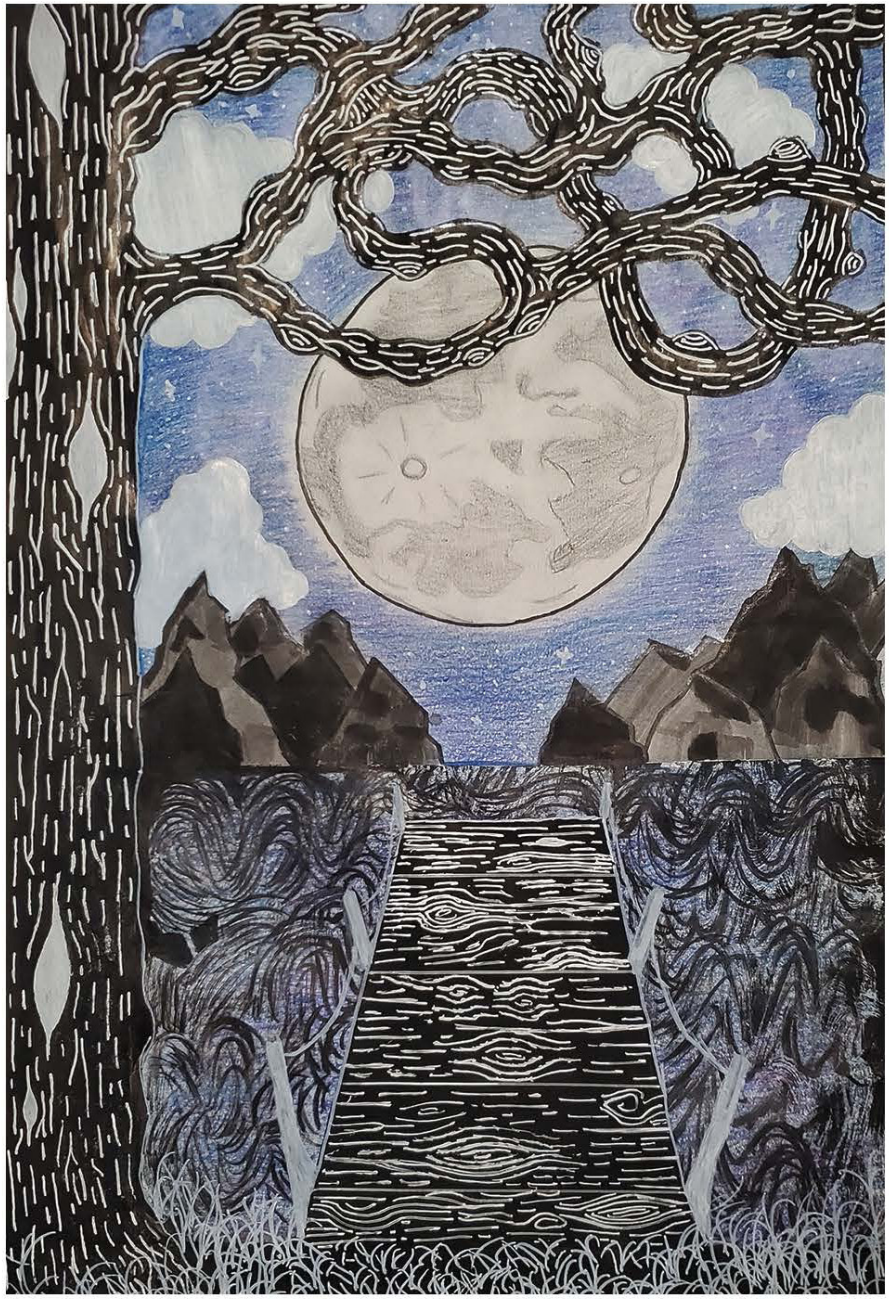
I am many things, but what am I without a destination?
A road is forever winding, but it too has a destination.
The rope forever tugs, and I too am forever searching.



Nature's Wicked Eye

by Kent Humphries

The winter tree stands tall, shriveled, and bare.
Alone in fields of white it stares,
Hoping to once again see the light,
The sky grows gray, and dark, and thick.
The storm begins; the tree is solemn.
Snow floods the frozen earth.
The tree suffers the storms harsh winds.
Thrashing back and forth it sways.
CRACK!
The tree falls dead in winter.
Alone, all cold and fully frozen,
Alone, no leaves surely broken,
The tree alone does naught but lie,
And over watches Nature's wicked eye.



Gentle Monstrosity

By Ally Melendez

I am a monster, but no one will believe me.
I have no claws.
My teeth are dull.
I have no scales.
I am a monster all the same.

I am a soft monster.
I don't want claws.
My touch is soft as a pillow
And just as suffocating.
I am a monster.

I am a sweet monster.
I don't want fangs.
My words are as sweet as ethylene glycol
And just as poisonous.
I am a monster.

I am a beautiful monster.
I don't want scales.
My beauty is that of leaves in autumn
And just as dead and decaying.
I am a monster.

No one believes me still.
I am not terrifying.
I am not quick to anger.
I am kind in my nature.
I am a monster all the same.

I am a welcoming monster.
I don't want to be terrifying.
My demeanor is welcoming as a web
And just as imprisoning.
I am a monster.

I am a merciful monster.

I don't want to rage.

My forgiveness is cold as snow and ice

And just as deadly.

I am a monster.

I am a kind monster.

I don't want to be cruel.

I am as nice as a smile

And just as deceptive.

I am a monster of my own design.

I am an honest monster.

I am a human monster.

Reveling in my gentle monstrosity.

Light Poles

by Connor Monaghan

As I drive past light poles
They spontaneously go out
One by one, they flicker — then cease

I debate on how to take them
Perhaps they're an omen — one of dark loomings
Perhaps they're introspective, capturing the last sparks of my internal light
Perhaps they're calls for motivation — "Quick before your time has run out!"
Perhaps they're the words of God, reaching for my heart

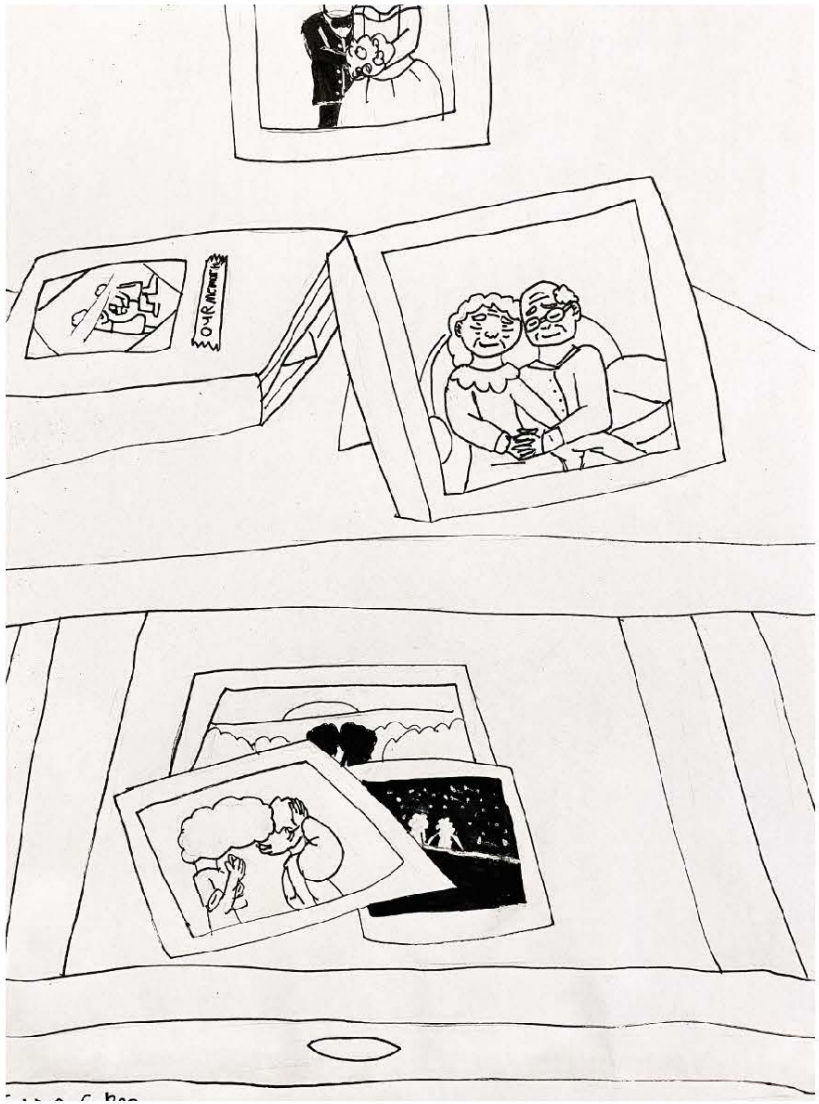
To be truthful, it all depends on my mood
On a heavy rainfall, returning from a heavy burden
The light poles snicker at me
On a peaceful breeze, leaving a now-forgotten chapter, flipping the page
The light poles smile at me

And they always seem to talk at the moments of climax
On every, single, drive

No matter the spirit of it all
I am separated, locked behind my windows
The poles are without — they live on their own
Perhaps that is why it's so eerie to approach one on foot
The meeting of two worlds — one stationary, one constant

Yet, perhaps they mean nothing
They're just minimal coincidences, in a small town, located nowhere
But, as long as I have reason to believe they're otherworldly, heavenly
Then they are

Then they always are



Just Pictures

by Madeline Comer

One day, we'll just be pictures in a drawer
Right now, we live on rooftops with the stars
One day, we'll just be a Polaroid
Today, we watch the sunset from the treetops
One day, we'll just be a picture in a frame
In this moment, we laugh late into the night
One day, we'll just be a picture in a book
This year will be our legacy
One day, these pictures hanging in the house will be a faint memory
Today, we joke about our youth
One day, we'll be each other's fondest memories
One day, yes, but for now, today is my favorite memory

The Day After Valentine's Day

by Emily Moorman

When Valentine's Day came,
I felt peaceful and content.
Instagram can keep the flowers,
And the wasted money spent.

But now it's just a plain day;
Life is mundane again.
And now I wish I had someone
Who didn't love me like a friend.

I don't need a chocolate heart
Or a big red balloon.
I want a man whose actions tell me
He loves me to the moon.

I want to hold his hand
When I'm driving to the store.
I want to hug him tight
When this life leaves him sore.

I want to tell him how loved
And safe he makes me feel.
I want to cherish him every day,
So then he'll know it's real.

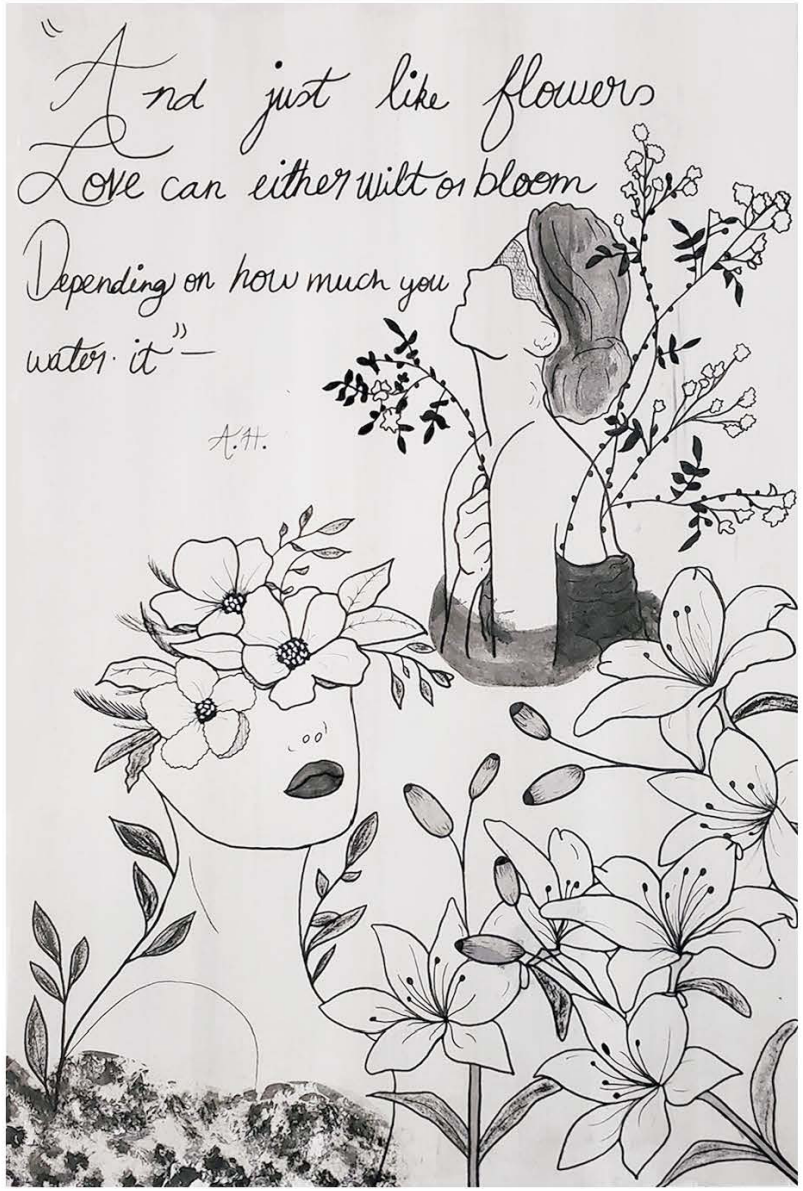
I can handle Cupid
And his V-Day charades,
But nothing breaks my heart
Like the day after Valentine's Day.

Invisible Man

by Madison James

Everyone's heard the story of the Invisible Man. I have my own.
He's the man who was supposed to love me most, but it was never shown.
He's part of the reason I'm able to sit and talk this through,
But since the day he left, part of me became invisible too.
I tried to hide the parts of me he broke like an old toy.
Did he leave because I wasn't good enough? Or that I wasn't born a boy?
Eighteen years have passed, and he doesn't know me,
If he wanted to be visible again, would I even want to see?
Though he may be invisible, much like the scars he leaves,
He has never done anything wrong, or so he believes.

To leave your young child equates not caring,
The faith and trust they put in others starts wearing.
Withholding thoughts, emotions, and love you could share,
But you keep it inside knowing it's your cross to bear.
Resentment swirling inside affecting the life you lead.
But knowing you cannot hate because you are his seed,
Never understanding the path that he chose,
Hoping that something comes from life's throes.
Your parents' choices are not something by which you're defined,
You can change your conditions with your feet and your mind.



The Rotting Chair

by Austin Keith Mooneyham

In the utter absence of the very vessel that propelled me
I am only reminded of the memory of muscle
But no muscle memory
For I am now simply a chair
Furniture for a room
prepared
To be observed and groomed

Decorative as I have become
The ants and termites feast upon the splinters shadowed by the setting sun
Extinguishing the wooden lifeblood that is now my only character
Approaches the realization that I am becoming clutter
Occupying space
While my dilapidated legs rot into waste

The walls whisper rumors about the marrowless chair among them
About the chair's twisted amygdala and warped conscious conundrums
A molded and mildewed aura left by the chair’s presence
Spills the larvae and grubs that infect the chair's essence
The walls so devilishly whisper that the chair was once a man
But he is now only a decoration
Subject to earth’s disintegration

A decrepit chair
Whose former glory and tidiness were so mistakenly excused by manly ignorance
Now stands a rotten and splinted innocence
And for those who dare to rest their bones upon this chair
Beware the protruding and puncturing nails of maleficence.

The Rain

By Sydney Freeman

Pattering against my windowpane, I hear you.
Your gentle voice calls me out of my cocoon.
I crawl out a little, only to peek.
Your smile, your comforting embrace is there. . .

No.
No, I must not go.
You make me feel cold and miserable.
An umbrella cannot save me, nor a raincoat.

Just my choice to leave you alone.

Untitled (May 2020)
Keith Morris

Unexpected.

Your arms outstretched
Penetrating autumn in your voice
forever in embrace
and smile.

This is where I live and die.

This is where I lived.

You are memory.
You are memory, and I won't forget.

Why did you forget me in
the
dim
low
fall
of leaves?

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